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trade union information

TRADE UNION NEWS

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1. THE COMMISSION'S INFORMATION PROGRAMME IN PREPARATION FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

In view of the forthcoming direct elections by universal suffrage to the European Parliament, the Community's institutions and political parties will have to make a special effort to make the man in the street aware of what is actually involved in the European venture, with regard to its difficulties and its successes, its origins and its possibilities. The Commission has a major part to play in this process by making the best possible use of its normal information programme as well as the additional funds allocated to it for this purpose. Its task will be to provide wholly factual information about the working and activities of the Community. The political parties, in the course of their own election campaigns, will have to assess this information appropriately.

That is the premiss for the information programme regarding direct elections to the European Parliament recently adopted by the Commission. The Commission believes that if some 180 million voters are to make a well-founded decision in the polling booth, they must know how the Community operates, what issues must be dealt with at Community level and why, and what proposals are being made.

In this perspective, priority treatment must obviously be given to the representatives of the press, radio and television accredited to the Commission. It is largely because of this press corps and its optimum freedom of expression that most Europeans receive daily news of Community events.

Nevertheless, this democratic process at Community level requires a major effort. The task is immense, for it is that of making 180 million electors really aware of Community issues in other words, of ensuring as large as possible a participation in the direct elections to the European Parliament.

This programme will be implemented in association with the European Parliament's information services in order to ensure greater coordination and effectiveness of various actions.

However, the relatively limited funds specially allocated the Commission for this purpose (1 million u.a.) are so inadequate that the Commission has already decided to use not only those special budget funds but also a good proportion of the resources available within the framework of the normal information programme for 1977.

The normal information programme for 1977

First, throughout 1977, the direct elections theme will be given priority treatment throughout all information activities conducted under the Commission's normal information programme, which was presented to the European Parliament in December 1976 (Doc. SEC(76)4293).

Clearly any estimate at this stage must be rough; given that proviso, 65% of the Commission's information effort provided for 1977 under the ordinary programme for the Nine will be devoted to the theme of direct elections to the European Parliament: for instance, by publication of articles in Commission periodicals, by the organization of lectures on the theme during information visits; by the distribution of written or audiovisual documentation on Community policies; or by the designing of special displays for exhibitions, and so on.

Special programme to inform opinion-makers

The Commission has decided to devote almost all this programme to "opinion-makers". Obviously the programme is only preliminary to the activities which will have to be undertaken in 1978.

The media: Journalists in the member countries - including those on regional newspapers - will receive special attention. The Commission will supply them - through press and information offices - with the factual documentation which they need on the elections and on Community policies. It will also organize a special programme of visits to Brussels.

The Commission intends to intensify contacts with radio and television networks. The Commission's new colour TV studio will soon have a direct Eurovision link that will allow more extensive, speedy dissemination of Community news. National stations will also have access to other technical facilities. A series of working meetings will be organized in Brussels to promote cooperation between them.

Outside organizations: The Commission intends to organize a series of information seminars on European affairs which will enable participants in their turn to organize debates on Europe in the appropriate sections of their own organizations. These seminars will be organized at national, regional or Community levels.

The organizations the Commission has in mind here comprise political and trade unions associations, university associations, women's groups, farmers' associations, youth groups and movements, environmental protection and consumer information groups, and so on. The Commission plans to organize a special series of information briefings on European affairs for the leaders of various political, social and cultural groupings throughout the Community.

In addition, a major effort will be made to arrange refresher courses for existing speakers on Community affairs as well as to give intensive instruction to new speakers.

The use of outside speakers, a practice of most information offices, gives better penetration of various circles at levels which Commission services could not hope to reach otherwise.

Information material and documentation: The Commission will prepare information and documentation which will comprise for the most part publications and audiovisual material to accompany and facilitate the work of "opinion-makers" and to meet the large number of requests for information that will be received, as was shown by the referendum campaign in the United Kingdom.

Subsidies for programmes offered by outside organizations: The Commission will subsidize information programmes mounted by movements particularly interested in the European venture, as well as activities which could be developed with university help.

Very strict criteria will be applied in selecting the programmes for which financial aid will be made available: presentation of detailed programmes, political balance, impact on public opinion, spread effect, and contribution to costs by the movement or organization presenting the project.

Potential changes

In this regard it will be necessary, among other things, to translate into action the findings of the new survey of public attitudes to direct elections which will be carried out by the Commission at the request of the European Parliament. The techniques to be used will allow the survey to give reliable basic information on voters' attitudes, by region, by political conviction, and so forth. As we have said, this special programme will be restricted to 1977. Obviously, information activities will be even more extensive in 1978 and different methods will have to be used, in order to allow more direct action to persuade as many European voters as possible to take part in the first direct elections to the European Parliament.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIAL SITUATION IN THE COMMUNITIES IN 1976

The Commission of the European Communities has just published, as it does each year, its "Report on the Development of the Social Situation in the Communities."¹ This 250-page report is published in conjunction with the "Tenth General Report on the Activities of the European Communities," and relates developments in the social field during 1976.

In the General and Political Introduction, the report emphasizes the seriousness of unemployment at the end of 1976, when the number of the unemployed reached around 5.5 million. This is a matter for special concern when four out of ten unemployed are young people under 25 years of age, and an increasing number of women are also out of work. The return of full employment has therefore become a main objective of the Community towards, and the entire economic and social policy must be directed towards its achievement.

The Introduction underlines the fact that the chief responsibility for fighting continued unemployment in each country lies with the Governments of Member States, but that the Community for its part has a major role to play in helping to solve the problem. Its contribution should be made, in particular, by increasing the coordination of the employment policies of the individual Member States; by better analyses and forecasts at Community level; by more effective use of the funds available to it, especially in the form of the European Social Fund and the Regional Development Fund; and, lastly, by promoting a better "social consensus" between all concerned in the Community.

The Introduction then gives a survey of the various efforts already made by the Community in 1976 to resolve the unemployment problem. The introduction stresses the study of the question in meetings of experts by the Standing Committee on Employment and especially by the "Tripartite Conference", devoted to the theme of "re-establishing full employment and stability", which was held in Luxembourg in June 1976.

The special attention that the Commission has given to the employment problem has not caused it to lose sight of the need to continue its efforts to promote social progress and the Report gives a detailed account of the various decisions taken by the Council of Ministers for Social Affairs, and the proposals made by the Commission for implementation of the Social Action Programme.

(1) Available in the six Community languages from the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, BP 1003, Luxembourg, and from sales offices in the Member States for official publications of the European Communities.

After the General and Political Introduction, the second section of the Report outlines the activities of the institutions of the Communities in the social field in 1976 (this section also appears in the Tenth General Report). The third section deals with the development of the social situation in 1976 at Community level and in each Member State in the following areas: employment, vocational training, industrial relations, working conditions and labour law, wages, incomes and asset formation, housing, family affairs, social welfare services, social security, and safety, hygiene and health protection.

The fourth and last section is a detailed statistical survey which gives the development of the social situation in figures.

3. MEETING OF THE CONSUMERS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON 20 APRIL 1977

The Consumers' Advisory Committee met on 20 April 1977 for the first time, under the chairmanship of Mr DARY (COFACE). Mr CARPENTIER, Director of the Commission's Environment and Consumer Protection Service, stressed the Commission's desire to develop an active consumer protection policy.

The situation of the consumer members of the agricultural products Committees will be improved; they will be given more documentation and perhaps training courses organized by the Directorate-General for Information (Agricultural Information).

The Committee also commented on the opinion delivered by its office on 1 March 1977 regarding the Commission's agricultural price proposals for the 1977-78 marketing year.

Finally, the Committee carried out a preliminary examination of its probable working programme for future years. The next meeting of the Committee, Wednesday, 22 June 1977, is intended to be especially devoted to working out this programme.

4. COMMISSIONER R. BURKE RECEIVES THE TRANSPORT UNIONS OF THE EEC IN BRUSSELS ON 28 APRIL 1977

A delegation from the railwaymen's section of the Committee of Transport Unions in the EEC, led by Mr A. TONNEAUX, was received on 28 April 1977 by Mr R. BURKE, Member of the European Commission with special responsibility for transport affairs.

The discussion concerned the subjects of concern raised by the railwaymen's unions in their resolution of 7 December 1976.

The delegation stressed the urgent need for new Community measures which could substantially improve the present situation of railways and railwaymen in the Nine.

Mr R. BURKE took note of the unions' standpoints and stated that he was in favour of continuing and strengthening the dialogue with the trade union organizations on the questions raised.

5. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION
ADOPTS FIVE STATEMENTS

Meeting in ordinary session under the chairmanship of Mr H. O. VETTER, on 21 and 22 April 1977, the Executive Committee approved the following five position statements:

(a) ETUC statement on improved functioning of the Economic and Social Committee

A. Introduction

- (i) The European Trade Union Confederation believes that the Economic and Social Committee is a body which is indispensable for economic and social dialogue at Community level.
- (ii) Nevertheless, in order to bring the opinions delivered by the Economic and Social Committee more into line with present-day realities, a number of reforms are needed.
- (iii) The Economic and Social Committee cannot replace other bodies, such as the Standing Committee on Employment, the various advisory committees, or the sectoral Joint Committee, which assure direct contact between Governments, the Commission, employers and workers' organizations.
- (iv) The Committee cannot replace the contact which has existed for some time in the Tripartite Conferences and whose object, in our view, is to lay down the political guidelines necessary for satisfying demands for a more evolved society.
- (v) On the other hand, the European Trade Union Confederation believes that informal links or cooperation should be established between the various bodies delivering opinions.

B. The present situation

- (i) The Treaty of Rome is specific: "The Economic and Social Committee shall have advisory status. The Committee shall consist of representatives of the various categories of economic and social activity, in particular, representatives of producers, farmers, carriers, workers, dealers, craftsmen, professional occupations and representatives of the general public."

- (ii) In the last two years the work load of the Economic and Social Committee has increased considerably. In 1976, 159 opinions were drawn up, both on technical questions and on subjects of more general scope.
- (iii) Without taking into account the preliminary work at meetings, this work requires advisers, who have at the same time major responsibilities in their own countries, to spend ten days in Brussels.
- (iv) The members of the Committee are divided into three groups. Workers and employers, however, are not represented in equal numbers, and this inevitably has a distorting influence on the votes regarding the opinions.
- (v) The opinions issued are not always taken into consideration by the decision-making bodies, which do not at present have to justify their position to the Economic and Social Committee.
- (vi) The activities of the Economic and Social Committee are insufficiently well known outside, and that undoubtedly lessens their effectiveness.

C. The Confederation defines the Committee's role

- (i) The Committee should remain an advisory body: it is neither a negotiating nor a decision-making body. It should be a forum for discussions and confrontations between different economic and social categories on problems regarding the various national populations of the Community, to enable attempts to make at achieving guidelines or common positions.
- (ii) The Committee should, at the request of the Commission or of the Council, or on its own initiative, give opinions and present reports or studies on aspects of Community policy.
- (iii) Opinions should be given within adequate periods of time and in a precise form, so that they are capable of influencing decisions.
- (iv) The Committee should enter into close cooperation with the European Parliament. Should the European Parliament elected by universal suffrage obtain legislative power, the Economic and Social Committee should also become the Parliament's advisory body.

D. If the Committee is to fulfil its role, the following steps are necessary

- (i) Employers and workers should be equally represented in the Committee.
- (ii) The European Trade Union Confederation should be able to appoint members of the Economic and Social Committee directly.
- (iii) There should be a possibility of appointing alternates for full members.
- (iv) The right of initiative should be more judiciously used.
- (v) The Council, the Commission and perhaps the Parliament should request the Committee's opinion on all Community proposals.
- (vi) The Committee should be informed of the response made to its opinions and should be acquainted with the reasons why they are not taken into account.
- (vii) Members representing organizations affiliated to the Economic and Social Committee should take into consideration, when preparing their opinions, the positions worked out by the Confederation; on major questions they should ask the Confederation for its opinion if that has not already been given.
- (viii) An attempt should be made to establish closer links between the work of the Economic and Social Committee and that of the Confederation.
- (ix) Members of Group II should meet more often in order to discuss important topics and to reach, as far as possible, an unanimous decision on them.
- (x) The process of establishing the text of an opinion should enable a compromise to be sought between the different arguments and opinions within the Committee. However, not all compromises are acceptable:
 - (a) We have to defend our basic positions;
 - (b) a compromise cannot be in opposition to trade union standpoints;
 - (c) a compromise may be acceptable if it offers better propositions than the existing situation;
 - (d) in the case of major questions, it is preferable that the opinion should represent opposed ideas rather than amount to a synthesis which does not enlighten decision-making bodies concerning the respective positions.

- (xi) The Executive Committee of the European Trade Union Confederation empowers a working group, on the basis of the fundamental premisses outlined above, to establish the practical terms and conditions for an improved operation of the Committee and for greater effectiveness of Group II within it.

(b) European Trade Union Confederation programme regarding the
reduction of work time

1. Among the objectives adopted at the London Congress, the European Trade Union Confederation listed the following:

" A basic and permanent objective of the European trade union movement which exists quite independently of the present employment situation is the improvement of social and working conditions for workers by measures such as improved wages, the reduction of the number of hours worked, longer holidays, raising the age at which compulsory education ends, and reducing pensionable age. At present priority must be given in collective negotiating tactics to the protection of jobs and earnings. The Congress also believes that the time has come to launch a coordinated ETUC campaign to reduce working time by shortening the work week and lengthening holidays. In some countries office workers and certain shift workers already work the 35-hour week, and some groups of workers have negotiated an annual holiday of five weeks in all. The Congress believes that a movement towards such working conditions can begin now."

2. The Executive Committee of the European Trade Union Confederation believes that European workers are entitled to these improved working conditions, especially in the matter of time worked. The effects of rationalization and technical progress should include a reduction in time worked for men and women who devote their intelligence and energy to the ends of the production process.
3. Trade Union claims for a reduction in time worked are all the more urgent at the moment when there are millions of unemployed in Europe. In the existing circumstances, it is also one of the means of reaching a full employment policy by dividing the available volume of work as equitably as possible, though of course this measure cannot replace all the other demands of the trade union movement which are indispensable for full employment.

4. The reduction of working time may be conceived on the basis of the following four objectives:
 - (i) reduction of the working week in order to attain a 35-hour week;
 - (ii) extension of annual leave to a total of six weeks;
 - (iii) extension of the end of compulsory education to 16 years of age;
 - (iv) the possibility of retiring from the age of 60 without reduction of pension.
5. The Executive Committee of the European Trade Union Confederation is aware that all the above objectives considered as a whole cannot be attained in the near future. It has proceeded at Community level in full awareness that the priorities defined by its individual affiliated national organizations differ from one country to another. But it also believes that each national organization will find among these goals the particular objective towards which it is working as regards a reduction of working time.
6. Reduction of working time, either by cutting down the working week or by extension of annual leave or by lowering retirement age, must necessarily bring about the creation of new jobs, and therefore cannot be compensated for by rationalization measures or by speeding up the rhythm of work.
7. Similarly, the reduction in working time must in no case be accompanied by a loss of wages.
8. All overtime should give rise to compensation in the form of paid compensatory time-off. Through their trade unions, workers should be in a position to supervise overtime procedure.
9. The reduction of working time should be a priority, and greater in the case of arduous work. Especially in the case of continuous shift work, a claim should be made for a supplementary shift with an obligation to recruit more workers.
10. Rest time at the place of work should be treated as an integral part of periods of working time.

11. In the matter of the extension of the school-leaving age, this is something that can only be carried out in conjunction with reform of the education system. That should necessarily involve, as an integral part of school educational programmes, a general training for young people to prepare them for entry into working life.
12. A more flexible structure of working time should be considered for older workers so that they have a shorter work time table.
13. The European Trade Union Confederation requests all affiliated organizations to make their contributions, either by means of collective negotiation, or by asking for changes in national legislation, to the actual introduction of a reduction in working time; at the same time, the Confederation leaves affiliated organizations the free choice to base their approaches on the actual situation in their countries and to decide which objectives should take priority.
14. The European Trade Union Confederation itself will devote its efforts to ensuring that in international bodies consideration is given to the goals of reduced working time, both to bring about a substantial improvement in the living conditions of workers and also to introduce that full employment which is essential to enable the human individual fully to realize his or her potential.

(c) Statement of the Executive Committee of the European Trade Union Confederation on the universal direct elections to the European Parliament

The Executive Committee of the European Trade Union Confederation, at its meeting on 21-22 April 1977 in Brussels, noted the decision to hold the first direct elections to the European Parliament on the terms and within the period of time provided for by the convention of 20 September 1976.

The Executive Committee of the European Trade Union Confederation believes that this direct election to the Parliament is a major step forward inasmuch as it will mean a more extensive and more fundamental democratization process as requested for so long by the Confederation. In actual fact, the trade union organizations have on several occasions criticized the lack of democracy in the process of taking Community decisions and have even gone so far as to consider whether greater development of the Community's powers of decision should not be accompanied by a reinforcement of democracy in the Community.

The trade union organizations, for instance, make a close connection between the question of the development of a real Community economic and monetary policy and that of real Parliamentary power.

The Executive Committee of the European Trade Union Federation took the opportunity of emphasizing yet again the fact that the mere extension of these Parliamentary powers would not be sufficient to ensure the establishment of true institutional democracy.

For these reasons, the Executive Committee of the ETUC asked the secretariat and a working group to produce proposals for reforming the Economic and Social Committee. Obviously these proposals for reform cannot be restricted to the Economic and Social Committee, since they must take into account the existence and role of other bodies engaging in dialogue and participation, such as the Standing Committee on Employment, the Consultative Committee and the Tripartite Conferences.

Moreover, the Executive Committee of the ETUC repeats its opinion that an improved form of Parliamentary and institutional democracy will remain a curtailed democracy as long as it does not extend to the economy in general and as long as it does not reach into business concerns themselves.

The European Trade Union Confederation will take advantage of the electoral campaign in order to advertize its claims in this regard. A detailed programme to that end will be established as soon as possible.

The Executive Committee nevertheless stresses the fact that the democratization process advocated by the trade unions will only be fully effective if it answers the workers' socio-economic aspirations more effectively. The unions will therefore also use the campaign to increase the pressure of their demands for more effective measures (for instance, to fight unemployment, to improve workers' living and working conditions, and to guarantee the buying power of the workers and social beneficiaries).

The trade union movement will in no case accept a use of this electoral campaign to deflect workers' opinion from their own problems and claims. On the contrary, the European Trade Union Federation and its affiliated confederations in the countries of the European Economic Community should use this campaign to face political parties and candidates with their social and economic claims. This confrontation will have two objectives: stimulation of workers to vote, and improvement of their awareness of their own interests.

The European Trade Union Confederation deeply regrets the fact that the convention of September 1976 makes no provision for any right to vote for migrant workers from one of the countries of the European Economic Community residing in another of the Nine. For the right to vote constitutes a fundamental right in the political democratic system of all the Nine, on the obvious condition that it is truly universal.

Hence it is unacceptable that the right to vote on a basis of universal suffrage in direct elections to the European Parliament should not be accorded to a group of Europeans who, by their actual circumstances, are among those most emphatically interested in the economic and social development of the European Economic Community.

The Executive Committee of the ETUC has instructed the secretariat to submit to the European Commission and to the Governments of the member countries concrete proposals in this regard, and to do so with the least possible delay.

(d) European and worldwide action for economic recovery

1. The economic depression in Western Europe is now in its fourth year. Every year since 1973 there has been an increase in unemployment, and at present there are three times as many unemployed as there were then. Both the OECD and the Commission of the European Communities forecast that economic growth will be lower in 1977 than in 1976: namely, that it will be down from 2.75% to 2.25% in Western Europe, and down from 4.3% to 3.5% in the Community countries, with the result of a continued rise in unemployment.
2. The substantial changes that have taken place in the world undoubtedly pose difficult problems of adjustment, but the catastrophic situation which we are experiencing is a strong indictment of the policies many governments have pursued. The ETUC cannot and will not accept large-scale unemployment as normal. This economic and social waste is irresponsible, and policy changes are essential. A new departure is required. At the international level, this should be launched by the Downing Street Summit on 7-8 May 1977, and it should be followed within EFTA by the Heads of Government meeting in Vienna on 13 May, and within the European Community by the Tripartite Conference towards the end of June and the London European Council on 28-29 June.
3. At present, many governments, investors and workers lack confidence. For that reason it is essential that the Downing Street Summit (at which the European Community will be represented in its own right) should make a total commitment to ensuring that a sustained economic recovery does take place - a recovery which is essentially one of employment and not merely of output. The strongest economies should, of course,

give the lead, but other economies must be capable of following them so that a broadly based and mutually advantageous recovery can take place and continue.

4. Secondly, the Summit should express its determination to check and reduce inflation: not ineffectively and wastefully by allowing unemployment to develop, but by stronger employment policies and industrial policies, by active price and competition policies, by international monetary reforms and by international commodities agreements.
5. Thirdly, the Summit should open the way to the establishment of a fairer and more just international economic order. The ETUC is a European workers' organization, but that does not mean that we are concerned only with their problems. In an increasingly interdependent world, the ETUC acknowledges that European workers' problems cannot be tackled effectively unless real progress is also made in solving the social and economic problems of workers in other countries and continents.
6. Within EFTA, it is hoped that the Heads of Government meeting in Vienna will be able to build on solid foundations laid in London. Above all, the meeting should try to develop practical cooperation between EFTA countries to fight unemployment and other problems with active employment and industrial policies as well as with general and selective demand supervision measures, on the basis of the consensus reached at the Stockholm Tripartite Conference in February. Nevertheless, since there will be a free trade area throughout Europe from 1 July 1977, both the Vienna meeting and the European Council in London should discuss ways of developing practical methods of cooperation between EFTA and the EEC.
7. Within the EEC, the June Tripartite Conference, which is to be held shortly before the London European Council, should offer an opportunity for senior representatives of the Governments, of employers' organizations, of trade unions and of the Commission to examine jointly the main economic and social problems of the EEC. For the ETUC, the task of this Conference is clear: to find out why the Community is "off target" in regard to its objective of full employment by 1980 and the other goals agreed at the June 1976 Luxembourg Tripartite Economic and Social Conference, and to decide how to get back on target.

8. But, in order to be fully effective, the Conference must be adequately prepared. The ETUC is very concerned by the refusal of some Governments to prepare written reports on the policies they have followed and propose to follow in order to get back on target. It is not enough for the Commission alone to prepare a report. The ETUC already has opportunities for discussing matters with the Commission; the purpose of Tripartite Conferences is to extend Community-level discussions to enable them directly to include Council representatives. The ETUC is, of course, willing to offer its proposals for resolving Europe's economic problems even before the Conference, so that they can be duly considered; and we count on Governments, as well as the Commission and the employers' organizations, to show that they take the Conference seriously and to act accordingly.

e) Resolution of the European Trade Union Confederation on the demand for workers' representation on the Board of Directors of the European Investment Bank

1. In the past two years it has been generally acknowledged that it would be of greater advantage to everyone to use the operational financial instruments already available in the European Community, such as the Agricultural Fund, the Social Fund, the Regional Development Fund, the funds provided for by the ECSC Treaty and the European Investment Bank, not only "purposefully" but "purposefully and in coordination". This idea has gained acceptance rapidly as unsolved unemployment problems have multiplied in all countries.

The ETUC has pointed out the need to coordinate the activities of the above financial instruments, particularly when the initial decision was taken to set up the European Regional Development Fund. It welcomes the efforts which have been made for that purpose.

2. It is clear that a coordinated use of the Community's financial instruments can only form part of an active employment policy. However, if use of the available funds is concentrated and coordinated it would help considerably in revealing the effects and advantages of Community policy.

Nevertheless, the ETUC believes that it is not enough to state one's approval of a coordination of the activities of the Community's financial instruments. The following two factors are essential preconditions for effecting such coordination:

- (a) The mechanisms for intervention by means of the financial instruments of the Community must be harmonized so as to constitute no hindrance to practical policy;
 - (b) the coordination body (task force) which has been established at the Commission of the European Communities in the meantime must be vested with powers sufficient to ensure that the available funds are used effectively.
3. The ETUC repeats its criticism of the fact that worker participation through trade unions in the making of decisions by the Community's financial instruments is inadequate; accordingly it urges the Commission and the Council of Ministers to fill this gap by new initiatives.
4. In one of the Community's financial instruments, the European Investment Bank, the trade unions have no means at all of participating in decisions on the granting of loans.

The Board of Directors of the European Investment Bank consists wholly of government officials and bank representatives, despite the fact that this financial institution was established to fulfil Community tasks (projects for the development of under-developed areas, plans for modernizing or converting undertakings or for creating new jobs). These tasks correspond to the tasks of the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, and the means made available under the ECSC Treaty.

The ETUC finds it a serious shortcoming that no provision should be made for the representation of the European workers' and employers' organizations on the Board of Directors of the European Investment Bank. It therefore calls on the Governments of the EEC Member States and the EEC Council of Ministers forthwith to make the appropriate amendments to Article 11 of the Statute of the European Investment Bank.

6. THE CHRISTIAN WORKERS MOVEMENT (MOUVEMENT OUVRIER CHRETIEN)
ACCEPTS A MEMORANDUM ON IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS, IN BRUSSELS
ON 6 APRIL 1977

When it met on 20 April 1977 in Brussels, the Executive Committee of the Christian Workers Movement (MOC/ACW) adopted a memorandum addressed to the next Belgian government.

The document comprises a text common to the MOC and ACW.

It concerns the best and full employment for an improved economy, a new health policy, family policy, housing and town and country planning policy, education, the redistribution of political power, and foreign policy.

The text adopted by the Walloon and Brussels MOC treats of problems relating to institutional reform, regional policies (French-speaking Belgium - Wallonia and Brussels) and cultural policy.

The priority measures recommended include:

- (i) a general and progressive reduction of working hours;
- (ii) a third circuit for work;
- (iii) raising of the school-leaving age;
- (iv) measures against holding more than one job;
- (v) the need for speedy establishment of the instruments of economic, social and regional policy;
- (vi) an obligation for multinational companies to adopt the Statute for European companies;
- (vii) a basic revision of Belgian economic and industrial policy in terms of a new international division of labour;
- (viii) the democratization of business undertakings in accordance with the proposals of the ACW/MOC and the CSC;
- (ix) political rights for immigrants in municipal elections and the European elections in 1978;
- (x) active intervention by Belgium in the North-South dialogue to obtain the establishment of a Fund for regulating basic commodity prices;
- (xi) revision of Belgian policy on international cooperation in order to exclude countries which do not respect basic human rights.

7. EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE NETHERLANDS TRADE UNION FEDERATION (FNV) ON EUROPEAN INTEGRATION IN AMSTERDAM ON 6 APRIL 1977

In association with the "Trade Unions" unit of the Directorate-General for Information and the Hague Office, the Netherlands Trade Union Federation (FNV) organized a European meeting in Amsterdam on 6 April.

The FNV (Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging) is the biggest Dutch trade union organization. It has more than a million members, and unions affiliated to the NVV and NKV Federations belong to it.

The occasion was an Extraordinary General Meeting, entirely devoted to the European Community, in which large delegations from all the unions took part.

The object of this day of deliberation and discussion - which took place in the period of the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the Rome Treaties - might be defined as follows: "Are there reasons for the trade union movement to be satisfied with European integration and how should the European Community develop in the future?"

The participants numbered 400 to 500 and were able to prepare for the day's proceedings on the basis of three documents:

1. An FNV study on the European Community (internal development; external relations; social and economic policy; the influence of the workers and their organizations on decision-making within the Community).
2. The action programme of the European Trade Union Confederation, adopted in London on 22-24 April 1976.
3. A shorter memorandum intended to facilitate discussion.

In his introduction, Chairman Wim KOK reminded delegates that the Statute of the FNV stipulated that FNV was a fervent supporter of European integration, but not at any price. One of the most important observations of Mr KOK was the following: "In the course of this day, at the end of which we shall take no decision and adopt no resolutions, we want to make a kind of inventory; above all, we want to discuss the possibility of improved operation and better use of all available instruments."

Vice-Chairman H. VREDELING then examined four points:

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| 1. external affairs; | 3. enlargement; |
| 2. social policy; | 4. direct elections. |

1. In the matter of external affairs, he reviewed the impressive list of the relations and activities of the European Community in this area.
2. As regards social problems and more especially unemployment, Mr VREDELING did not dare to think what the situation might be today without the EEC. Perhaps the present unemployment rates would have been double if pre-war protectionism had been allowed free play. The speaker also believed that the role of Ministers of Social Affairs was often inadequate. He thought that the next Tripartite Conference (employers, workers, Governments and the Commission), which was planned for June 1977, should be followed by another conference before the end of the year. Because of lack of time, the Tripartite Conference for June would only offer an opportunity to make a list of the reasons why the goals set by the June 1976 Conference had not been achieved. What had been missing since June 1976 was a forum in which, at regular intervals, the coordination between policies followed and fixed goals could have been checked. The end-of-the-year Conference should be orientated towards the future.
3. As for a possible enlargement of the Community, the speaker noted that, in spite of criticism within the Community, a number of countries had set their hopes on joining it.
4. The speaker finally looked at the question of direct elections to the European Parliament. He saw them as the beginning of a phenomenon which had been absent until then: the de facto politicization of the European venture. A task was reserved for the trade union movement, which should make its members aware of the areas where workers' interests were affected by European policy, where improvements were needed, and in what way the trade union movement would be more effectively integrated into European policy.

Afterwards Jan VAN GREUNSVEN, Secretary of the FNV for European affairs, and Vice-Chairman of the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities, presented the Meeting with the document specially prepared for the occasion.

He noted around him a certain amount of disappointment, especially among those who had expected a lot - perhaps too much - from the European Community. Nevertheless, there was no way back. The way ahead was difficult but full of hope. Having emphasized a number of weak points, he made a plea for a strong European trade union movement.

The Meeting then listened to about ten other speakers, and replies to them by Mr VAN GREUNSVEN. The following main points could be deduced from this discussion:

- (i) Within the FNV there was broad unanimity concerning the importance of the European Community;

- (ii) although many general and specific criticisms had been made, no one had pleaded for protectionist or negative measures;
- (iii) on the contrary, it was clear that the FNV was ready to cooperate constructively in order to ensure that the Community functioned better; that should imply improved ordering of the Community's economic policy and a strengthening of its social policy;
- (iv) it is essential that the European Trade Union Confederation should be reinforced and that the consequences of that reinforcement should be accepted. The ETUC should be given wider powers and assistance had to be given to the transfer of certain responsibilities and tasks from the national confederations to the ETUC;
- (v) the strengthening of the trade union movement is one of the means of increasing its influence on developments in Europe. It was necessary to improve in the European Community the influence of workers on economic and social policy in the industrial sectors;
- (vi) The European Community should be opened to all European countries which enjoy a democratic system of government. This would be a good thing if a larger Community could eliminate existing imbalance;
- (vii) a large-scale information campaign is essential in view of the direct elections to the European Parliament. The trade union movement should exert its influence in this European political field. Within the FNV, members should be made aware of what is at stake.

In his closing speech, Chairman Wim KOK, after repeating that no conclusion or decision had been taken by the Meeting, emphasized these few major points. He added that there were few problems to which the FNV, as a trade union organization, could find solutions within the frontiers of the Netherlands. The real solutions had to be found together with representatives of other nations. That was why we needed allies in the struggle against capitalism.

The European Community could not be inward-looking.

We had to put economic growth in Europe at the service of a really cooperative division of available means throughout the world. Mr KOK opposed the argument that growth in the rich countries would automatically raise the level of growth in the poor countries.

At the end of his extempore speech, Mr KOK again made a plea for an extension of the tasks and powers of the future elected European Parliament as well as for a reinforcement of the ETUC in numbers as well as funds.

Within the ETUC, the FNV must fight for the realization of a European trade union programme.

8. EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS OF THE BELGIAN GENERAL WORKERS' FEDERATION (FGTB) IN GHENT, 22 APRIL 1977

At an extraordinary congress in Ghent on 22 April 1977 the delegates of the Belgian General Workers' Federation (FGTB) accepted a memorandum presented by the Secretary-General, Mr DEBUNNE, on an alternative progressive policy in Belgium.

The objectives referred to in the document will act as guidelines for FGTB attitudes and actions up to 1980.

According to the Secretary-General, the aim is work for all while safeguarding and improving social welfare, buying power and the quality of life.

To attain these goals, the FGTB requires structural reforms in the direction of a more democratic society in all spheres (political, economic, social and cultural) and at all levels (from individual undertaking to European level) and a society which is more egalitarian in terms of rights through the elimination of all forms of discrimination (with regard to sex, age or race).

The guidelines adopted were:

- (i) the delegation of powers to regions and to citizens;
- (ii) an economy placed at the service of society and of man through democratic planning (public initiative, new industrial and commercial policy, public control of key sectors of economic life, energy, credit, public transport, water - worker control at all levels);
- (iii) redistribution of incomes by a more just tax system which would remove all inequalities;
- (iv) improvement of social welfare provisions by a revision of social security in the direction of greater interdependence.

At European level, the FGTB demands a democratic Europe.

1. The political, economic, financial and monetary powers are shifting to some extent and inadequately in Europe, and certainly in the Community, but there are no democratic regulations to govern this shift.
2. There should be a response from all progressive forces acting together at European level to supplement national action in view of the crisis affecting the world of labour.
3. We oppose a progressive Europe of workers to the common market of capital, multinationals and speculation. The new Europe will be a society of free men in an integrated Europe, one which will extend itself to include democratic states that are capable of contributing:

- (i) to the development of understanding and cooperation between nations, to the growth of peace in the world, and to the abolition of oppressive systems of government;
 - (ii) by the pooling of energy and resources, to social progress, to the improvement of conditions and quality of life and work, and to full employment;
 - (iii) to the promotion of a true democracy and to the supervision and common action at all levels by workers represented by their inter-trade and European trade unions;
4. Respect for democratic rules will be ensured above all by:
- (i) the existence of a Parliament elected by universal suffrage, endowed with real powers;
 - (ii) acceptance by those politically responsible as well as by employers, of confrontation and discussion with representative workers' organizations, and of the negotiation of European collective agreements;
 - (iii) the removal of all barriers to the free exercise of trade union activity within undertakings.
5. The seriousness of the economic situation demands common action based on:
- (i) the will to obtain full and best possible forms of employment in regions as a vital objective to which economic and financial policies must be subordinated so that human ends predominate. This intention implies, in particular, a reduction in working time;
 - (ii) the safeguarding of buying power and its improvement within the framework of an improved quality of life.
6. The European Community will also affirm by its practical actions its solidarity with the developing countries.

9. I N B R I E F

EUROPEAN TRADE UNIONS

FRANCE / THE NETHERLANDS

VISIT OF A DELEGATION FROM THE NETHERLANDS CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (FNV) TO THE CGT-FO (FRANCE)

At the end of March 1977 a delegation of the FNV led by Mr W. KOK, Chairman, and Mr SPIT, Vice-Chairman (The Netherlands), visited the CGT-FO, in Paris. Views were exchanged on the basis of a summary of the economic, social and trade union situation in France and the Netherlands. On the European level, the CGT-FO and the FNV declared themselves resolved to being about the rebirth of a Community sense of political purpose and to that end they attach the greatest importance to the direct elections by universal suffrage to the European Parliament.

FRANCE

THE CGT-FO CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF THE EEC

On 30 March 1977 the Confederation Office of the FO reaffirmed at a meeting its deep commitment to the building of a Europe united economically, socially and politically. The realities of the present situation, and the ever-growing interdependence of national economies, demand more than ever before that concerted measures should be taken at Community level in order to deal with the consequences of economic crisis in the areas of employment, inflation and currencies. There is no national solution to these problems. The Confederation Office of the FO strongly desires that the direct election of the European Parliament set for spring 1978 should give a new stimulus towards European unity and contribute to the revival of popular support weakened by accumulated delays and dilatoriness, the lack of political will, and refusals to transfer responsibility. The Confederation Office of the FO remains convinced that pursuit and reinforcement of the construction of Europe, towards the goal of a United States of Europe is vital if democratic liberties and peace are to be preserved.

UNITED KINGDOM

ELECTION OF A NEW GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE TRANSPORT AND GENERAL WORKERS' UNION (TGWU)

The biggest trade union in the United Kingdom within the TUC is the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU). It has just elected a new General Secretary, Mr MOSS EVANS, a 52-year-old Welshman. Mr EVANS will succeed Mr Jack JONES in March 1978 when the latter retires.

A recent survey indicated that for the great majority of people in Britain the "most powerful man" in the country was not the Prime Minister but Mr JONES, the General Secretary of the TGWU.

Mr JONES played a leading part in establishing the "social contract" thanks to which the Government was able to persuade the unions to moderate their wage claims.

The TGWU comprises more than two million members, and its vote at the TUC Congress and the Labour Party Congress is often decisive.

Mr EVANS will remain, in principle at least, at the head of the TGWU for 14 years, since he is elected "for life", which means until retirement age, i.e. 65 years.

BELGIUM

Mr Juan FERNANDEZ IS ELECTED SECRETARY OF THE CENTRALE GENERALE (FGTB)

The National Committee of the Centrale Generale, one of the largest unions in the FGFB, has elected Mr J. FERNANDEZ National Secretary. He will be most concerned with workers in the tobacco industry, the leather and hides industries, agriculture, horticulture, furriers, fur cutters, and materials salvage workers.

Since October 1969 Mr FERNANDEZ has performed the functions of Secretary-General of the European Federation of Building Workers and Woodworkers of the EEC.

C O N G R E S S =====

The Netherlands

The European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF) in the Community will hold its third General Assembly in AMSTERDAM on 17 and 18 May 1977.

France

The statutory Congress of the CGT-Force Ouvrière will take place at Vichy from 10 to 13 May.

Italy

The three Italian trade union confederations will meet in statutory Congress:

At RIMINI (the CGIL, from 6 to 11 June, 1977);
At ROME (the CISL, from 14 to 18 June 1977);
At BOLOGNA (the UIL, from 29 June to 3 July 1977).

We shall return to the deliberations of these Congresses in forthcoming issues of this bulletin.

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